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THE QUAKERS PLEA WITH THE BISHOPS at their Eccleſiaſtical Courts.

OR,

An Anſwer of the People of God, reproachfully called *Quakers*, to the Bill of Preſentment put againſt them into the Biſhops Courts, for not coming to the Church as is pretended. Whereby it may appear, that the *Quakers*, ſo called, do come to the Church, both according to the Scriptures, and Common-Prayer books account, and ought not in equity and reaſon to be preſented, or puniſhed for that, *&c.*

LONDON,
Printed in the Year, 1663.

QUAKERS

PLEA

WITH THE

BISHOPS

at their Ecclesiastical Courts.

LONDON,
Printed in the Year, 1693.

The Quakers Plea with the Bishops at their Ecclesiastical Courts, &c.

WHereas the people of God (reproachfully called *Quakers*) are presented to the Bishops as offenders, for not coming to the Church, as is pretended. Now if we can make it appear (as we hope we can) according to truth, the Scripture, and Common-Prayer account, that we are the onely people (or of them) that do come to the Church and Service of God, then we ought in equity and reason to be cleared, and clearly acquitted from those pretended offences, and from all punishments due thereunto; and the case in controversie ought to be terminated, and we to be acquitted, and clearly discharged therefrom, and our accusers to be sharply reproved to the end and intent that they do so no more.

One main question, or thing enquirable by the Bishops, or their Officers, of us, at their Ecclesiastical Courts now in this age and time, is, Whether we come to the Church and Service of God, or no?

In order to a full and satisfactory answer to the things in that case charged against us, we ask, What is it that you do really own to be or call, and account the Church? Whether the Church according to your own account, be the Cathedrals and Parish Meeting-places, because many in ignorance call them the Church? And whether doth the Scriptures or Common-Prayer book account, or declare Cathedrals, or Parish Meeting-places to be the onely true Churches, which we and all the people of God are enjoyned to come unto, in point of Religion and worship of God, according to Gospel-order, and practice of the people of God under that dispensation, as left upon record in the holy Scriptures? If in answer thereunto you say no, then we further enquire, Whether

ther you would have us to own that to be the onely true Church of Christ, which is neither really owned, or declared so to be, either by the Scriptures, or Common-Prayer book? And would you make us offenders, when neither Scripture nor Common-Prayer book maketh us so? or would you punish us as offenders for not coming to that which in reality is neither owned by the Scripture, or Common Prayer book? Is there any equity or reason for that? Consider well of it, and if upon serious consideration, the witness of God in you answer the equitableness and justness of our innocent cause, and tell you by testifying to your consciences, that there is neither equity nor reason to punish us as offenders, for that which is neither owned by the Scripture or Common-Prayer book, because you profess them both as your rules in point of Religion and worship of God. Then be advised, and do not proceed against us in judgment, when the witness of God in your own consciences answereth for us, lest God the righteous Judge enter into judgement with you for so doing.

And if you be convinced and perswaded in your hearts and consciences, that Cathedrals, or Parish Meeting-places are not the onely true Church of Christ, (as well you may, if you have any right understanding in the things of God, according to Gospel dispensation) because the Scriptures do declare the onely true Church to be the body of Christ, and Christ to be the head of the Church, which is his body, as it is written and left upon Record in Scripture, *Ephes.*1,22,23.

And if you do believe that the Church is the body of Christ, and that Christ is the head of his body the Church, then you may well be convinced and perswaded (or at least ought) that Cathedrals, or Parish Meeting places are not the Church, because Cathedrals, and Parish Meeting-places are not the body of Christ.

Christ so loved the Church, that he gave himself for it; that he might sanctifie and cleanse it, and make it unto himself a glorious Church, that it should be holy and without blemish, *Ephes.* 5,23,24,25,26,27. And also the Lord doth nourish and cherish the Church, as it is written, *Eph.*5,28,29.

But where is it written, that Cathedrals and Parish Meeting-

places

places (commonly called Parish churches) are the body of Christ, or that Christ is the Head of them, or that Christ laid down his life for them, or that they are nourished and cherished by the Lord, as aforesaid?

If you say, Cathedrals and Parish Meeting places, commonly called Parishes, are not the body of Christ, therefore not the Church, neither did Christ lay down his life for them, neither are they nourished and cherished by the Lord, as aforesaid, therefore we do not account them the Church.

What then is it that you call and account the Church, and require us to come unto, which we are presented for not coming to? if you say and confess that Cathedrals and Parish Meeting-places, commonly called Parish Churches, is not the thing you require us to come unto, because it is evident by the Scriptures and Common-prayer Book, that Cathedrals and parish-Meeting-places are not the Church, which is the body of Christ, and nourished and cherished by the Lord, as aforesaid.

We further ask, What is the Church? If you deny Cathedrals and parish-meeting-places to be the Church, as aforesaid, are the ungodly people, such as are not governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, (though they may meet in Cathedrals and parish-meeting-places) the Church, which is the body of Christ, subject unto Christ, and as aforesaid?

And if you say, No! They who are not governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, are not true Members of the Church of God. If so, then may not we say, That though we may not come to Cathedrals or parish meeting places, commonly called parish churches, nor meet in point of Religion and Worship of God, with such people as are not governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, it cannot properly be laid, that we do not come to the church, neither ought we to be presented or punished for refusing to meet in point of Religion and Worship of God, with them who are not governed and sanctified by the Spirit of the Lord, though they may meet in Cathedrals or parish-meeting-places, commonly called parish churches as aforesaid.

Concerning the Church what it is, according to Scripture-account.

THe ſanctified and beloved people of God are in Scripture accounted and declared to be the Church of God. It is ſaid in *Eph.*5.25. *Chriſt ſo loved the Church, that he gave himſelf for it.* And in *Eph.*5.1,2. it is ſaid concerning the Saints, *Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children, and walk in love, even as Chriſt hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us; Chriſt ſo loved the Church, that he gave himſelf for it, Eph.* 5.25. And *Chriſt ſo loved us, that he gave himſelf for us,* (ſaid the Saints and beloved people of God, *Eph.*5.1,2.) Therefore the Saints and beloved people of God, according both to the Scripture and our account, are the Church, as aforeſaid. And ſuch we meet withal, therefore we come to the Church.

But Fornication and all uncleanneſs, or covetouſneſs, let it not be once named amongſt you, as becometh Saints, *Eph.*5.3. Fornication and uncleanneſs are things not owned by the Church, neither filthineſs, neither fooliſh talking nor jeſting, which are things not comely, as it is written *Eph.* 5.3,4. Theſe things are caſt out of the Church, and are found amongſt the unſanctified people, who are not governed and ſanctified by the Spirit of God.

The Scriptures do own the Saints and beloved people of God to be the Church of God, and we own them ſo to be. Therefore with the Scriptures we concur and agree, 1 *Theſſ.*2, 14. *Acts* 13, 1,2,3 *Matth.*18.15,16,17, *Acts* 20.28. *Col.* 1,24,25. *Eph* 5.27,28,29,30,31,32.

The Scripture ſaith, *That holineſs becometh the Houſe of the Lord for ever;* and we ſay the ſame, therefore the Scriptures and we agree in one. And the people of God in the New-Covenant are ſaid to be the Houſe of God, *Heb.*3.5,6. therefore holineſs becometh them. The Scripture ſaith, That the Saints or people of God are the Houſe and Houſhold of God, and we ſay the ſame; therefore the Scriptures and we agree in one, 1 *Tim.* 3.15, *Eph.*2.19,20,21,22.

The

The Church of God in the new Covenant and Gospel-dispensation is the House of God; and the people of God are the Church of God: Therefore the people of *God* in the New Covenant and Gospel-dispensation, are the House of God, as may be read, 1 *Tim.*3.15. *Eph.*5.23,24. *Heb.*3.5,6. 1 *Pet.* 2.5.

To meet in point of Religion and Worship of God, with them who as dear children are followers of God, *Eph.* 5.1,2. is to come to the Church; and such we meet withall in point of Religion and Worship of *God*; therefore we come to the Church, according to the Scripture-account, as aforesaid.

The Church according to the Scripture account, is the Houshold of God; and the *Saints* and beloved people of God are the Houshold of God, as may be read *Eph* 2.19,20. Therefore the Saints and beloved people of God, according to the Scripture account, are the Church, as aforesaid.

To meet in point of *Religion* and Worship of God, with the Houshold of God, is to come to the Church, according to the Scripture account; and we meet in point of Religion and Worship of *God*, with the Houshold of God; therefore we come to the Church according to the Scripture account, as aforesaid.

They who come to the Church according to the Scripture account, ought not in equity and reason to be presented for not coming to the Church: And we (who are reproachfully called *Quakers*) do come to the Church according to the Scripture account; therefore we ought not to be presented or punished for not coming to the Church, by them that own the Scriptures as their Rule in point of Religion; there is neither Equity nor Reason for it.

The Houshold of God, which is the Church, are builded upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone, as may be seen, *Eph.*2.18, 19,20. Then they who are builded upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone, are the Church, the Houshold of God. And we who are reproached for the Name of Jesus, and are built upon the Light and Power of God, are built upon the Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Christ Jesus himself being the chief Cor-

Corner-stone. We are of the Houshold and Family of God, and do come to the Church, according to the Scripture account. And by the Church we are neither presentable nor punishable for that.

They who are governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, are true Members of the Church of God, 1 Cor. 1. 2. Rom. 8. 1. And we witness on the behalf of the Lord, and the Lords Spirit beareth witness on our behalf, That we are governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, Rom. 8. 14, 15, 16, 17. Therefore we are true Members of the Church of God; and are neither presentable nor punishable for not coming to the Church, especially by them who own the government and sanctification of the Spirit in declaration, though they seem to come far short thereof in life and conversation.

And if you say, *It's true, we come to the Church according to the Scripture account, and you do not present us, or go about to punish us for that, but because we come not to the Church according to the Common-Prayer-Book account.* Well.

Concerning the Church, what it is according to the Common-Prayer Book account.

IF it be granted that we (who are reproachfully called *Quakers*) do come to the Church according to the Scripture account, and are neither presentable nor punishable for that, then therein we are cleared. And if you say we are presented for not coming to the Church according to the account of the Common-Prayer-Book, then if we can make it appear by the Common-Prayer, that we come to the Church according to the account of the Common-Prayer, as aforesaid, then by your own rule, and that according to Equity and Reason, we ought to be clearly acquitted from the force of the aforesaid presentment, and therefore discharged to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever. If you say yea; then be men of your word, and let your yea be yea, by making good what you say, and we shall proceed to prove the thing in hand, or matter in question,

question afore-mentioned, that is, *Whether we come to the Church according to the Common-Prayer-Book, account, or not?*

To the which we answer and say, We do come to the Church according to the Common-Prayer-Book, and are therefore neither presentable nor punishable for that, but ought in equity and reason to be acquitted and clearly discharged therefrom, as aforesaid.

And if you say, it is not sufficiently proved by our affirmation aforesaid; We say, We do not say that which is false, but regard our word, and our yea is yea; therefore you may believe it for a truth in what we have said; but if you would have a further proof for the same, we ask (in order thereunto) whether you own that only to be the Church, which the Common-Prayer-Book owneth, or declareth so to be? If you say yea; then stand to your word, and be as you say, and we shall give you a further proof to make good what we have said, viz. That we come to the Church according to the account of the Common-Prayer-Book.

And if it be asked, Who, or what sort of people are owned by, or declared in the Common-Prayer-book to be the church of God? It is answered, That they who are governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, are the only people owned by, or declared in the Common-Prayer-Book to be the church of God.

Then to meet in point of Religion and Worship of God, with them who are governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, is to come to the church, according to the account of the Common-prayer-book. But we (who are reproachfully called *Quakers*) do meet with them who are governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, in point of Religion and Worship of God; therefore we come to the church as aforesaid.

And so we ought to have equal liberty and toleration with you in point of Religion and Worship of God. The Common Prayer Book owneth or declareth the Houshold and Family of God, to be the church of God. And we say, That the Houshold and Family of God, are the Saints and beloved people of God: Therefore to meet in point of Religion and Worship of God, with the Houshold and Family of God, which are the Saints

 and beloved people of God, is to come to the Church according to the account of the Common-Prayer book, and we meet in point of Religion and worship of God with the houshold and family of God: therefore we come to the Church as aforesaid, and are neither presentable nor punishable for that by the Church before mentioned.

For proof that the Church is owned, or declared by the Common-Prayer book to be the houshold and family of God, See the 5. Sunday after *Epiphany*, the Collect (so called) where it is said, *Lord keep thy Church and houshold continually in the true Religion.* And see 22. Sunday after *Trinity*, the Collect (so called) where it is said, *Lord we beseech thee to keep thy houshold the Church in continual godliness.* Here the Church is declared to be the houshold of God, and it is the work or act of God to keep it in continual godliness. Then they who are in continual ungodliness, are not accounted the houshold and Church of God, as aforesaid, because they are not willing to be ordered and kept by the Lord in continual godliness, as aforesaid. So that wicked and unsanctified people are not accounted the Church by the Common-Prayer book, neither are we enjoyned thereby to come to meet with wicked and unsanctified people in point of Religion, nor presentable for refusing so to do.

5 Sund. after Epiph. Coll. and 22 Sund. after Trinit. Coll.

And for proof that the Church is accounted the family of God, see *Good Friday*, the Collect (so called and moreover it is there said, *Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified.* So that the whole body of that Church which is owned or declared of in the Common-Prayer book, is said to be governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God as aforesaid: then that body which is not governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, is not there owned or declared by the Common-Prayer book to be the Church of God aforementioned. If the whole body of the Church be governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, then every particular member of that body is under the government and sanctification of that Spirit. And if the whole body of the Church of God be governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, whether are they any Ministers or members of the Church of God, who are not governed and sanctified by the Spirit

Spirit of God? for it is said by the Apostle, *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom.* 8. 9. (no Minister of Christ, nor member of his Church.) And doth not the Common-Prayer book say the same in effect, in saying, that the Church of God is the houshold and family of God, and that the whole body of the Church is governed & sanctified by the Spirit of God? Doth it not therefore follow that they are no Ministers of Christ, nor members of his Church, who are not governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, as aforesaid? If so, whether they who dayly err and go astray from the ways of God, be governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God? and if they who dayly err and go astray from the ways of God, be not governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, whether such be any Ministers of Christ, or members of the Church of God? and whether such as daily offend against Gods holy Laws, be governed and sanctified by Gods holy Spirit? because Gods holy Spirit doth not lead men daily to offend his own Laws. Or whether any for denying or refusing for conscience towards God, to meet in point of Religion and Worship of God with them who daily err and go astray from the ways of God, and for neglecting to meet with such as are not governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, can or ought in equity and reason according to truth be said to deny and refuse to come to the Church, which is the houshold and family of God, who are sanctified and governed by the Spirit of God, as aforesaid? will it not follow then, and that from the Common-Prayer book, *viz.*

1 That the Church of God is the houshold and family of God, and that the houshold and family of God are the Saints and beloved people of God?

2 That the family and houshold of God are governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, and they are the houshold and family of God, who are governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God?

3 That to come to, and meet with the houshold and family of God, is to come to, and meet with the Church of God?

4 That to meet in point of Religion and worship of God with them who are governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, is to come to the Church and service of God?

5 That they who are not governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, are not the Church of God.

6 That to refuse for conscience towards God to meet in point of Religion and worship of God, with them who daily err and go astray from the ways of God, and are not governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, is not to refuse to come to the Church as aforesaid.

7 That they who daily offend against Gods holy Laws, and being untaught of God, daily err from his ways, and refuse to meet in point of Religion and worship of God, with the household of God, which is governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God; those are such as neglect to come to the Church and service of God.

For we say the Saints and beloved people of God are under the administration and teachings of the light and Spirit of God, and subject thereunto. And they are the Saints and beloved people of God, who are under the administration and teachings of the Light and Spirit of God, and subject thereunto, as aforesaid. *For the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, as it is written,* Tit. 2. 11, 12.

The grace of God hath a teaching office in the hearts of the people of God, and they are taught by the grace of God to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts in order to a godly life and conversation. They who in obedience to the teachings of the grace, do deny ungodliness and worldly lusts in order to a godly life and conversation, do make it appear thereby, that they are under the administration of the grace of God, and subject thereunto. And it is an evident demonstration that such are the beloved people of God, and we who are reproachfully called Quakers, are under the teachings of the grace of God, and it is apparent to the world by our denial of ungodliness and worldly lusts, in order to a godly life and conversation, humbly be it spoken in the denial of all self-justification.

And the Common Prayer doth acknowledge, that God doth instruct his holy Church with heavenly doctrine, (see S. *Marks* day

day, in the Collect so called) (Here the Church of God is not declared to be a company of miserable sinners, who have no soul health in them, and if they have no soul's health in them, have they any turn of souls on heavenly doctrine in them? but the Church is here declared to be a holy Church.) And on *Good Friday* (so called) in the Collect, the whole body of the Church is said to be governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God. So that the Church which is governed and sanctified by the spirit of God, is declared to be the holy Church; and the holy Church is a sanctified body, and under a spiritual Government, because the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified by the spirit of God as aforesaid. And such a Church we own and come unto as is holy, and instructed by the Lord with heavenly doctrine.

If God instruct his holy Church with heavenly doctrine, and the people of God be the holy Church which God doth so instruct, then the people of God are a holy people, and under the administrations and teachings of the Light and holy spirit of God, which we own in principle, doctrine and conversation: And you own the same in declaration; are you not then in words or declaration therein become one with those you call Quakers? How can you then in equity and reason go about to present or punish us for owning in life and conversation, that which you own in declaration, but seem to come short of in life and conversation? Consider well of it, and let the light and spirit of God judge in this case between you and us, and joyn you therewith, so will you clearly acquit and justifie us and our innocent cause, which is the cause of a good conscience.

S. Mark day Coll.

And on *Sim.* and *Jude*, in the Collect (so called) it is said, *Almighty God which hast builded thy Congregation upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.* Here again may it not be observed, that Cathedrals and Parish Meeting-places, nor a company of miserable sinners, though they may meet therein are not accounted the Church which is the building and holy Congregation of God, by him builded upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Christ Jesus himself, as afore said?

Sim. & Jude Coll.

Then

Then to meet in point of Religion and worſhip of God with them who are ſought and taught of the Lord according to *John* 4.23. and 6.44,45. and are the holy Congregation, or building of God by him built upon a ſpiritual foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles. Chriſt Jeſus himſelf, as aforeſaid, according to *Eph.* 2.18,19,20,21,22. is to come to the holy Church and houſhold of God which is governed and ſanctified by the ſpirit of God, though they may not come to a Cathedral, or Pariſh Meeting-place, to meet with a company of miſerable ſinners, who have no health in them, as aforeſaid.

The holy Church is a ſanctified Church, both according to the Scripture and Common-Prayer account, and they who are governed and ſanctifiedby the ſpirit of *God*, are the holy Church, as aforeſaid; and ſuch a Church we are members of, and come to in point of Religion and worſhip of *God*.

Concerning the ſervice of God.

2 *Coll. for peace.* In the ſecond Collect for peace, it is ſaid, *O God which art the author of peace, and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom ſtandeth eternal life, whoſe ſervice is perfect freedom.*

If God be the Author of peace, then he is not the author of perſecution about matters of Religion, but a lover of concord; and lovers of *God* are lovers of peace and concord. Who then are the authors of perſecution about matters of Conſcience in point of Religion and worſhip of *God*? For our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath ſaid to his friends, who do his commands, *John* 15.14. *I command you that ye love one another*: John 15. 17. *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you*: *Remember the word that I ſaid unto you, The ſervant is not greater then the Lord*: *If they have perſecuted me, they will perſecute you*, Joh. 15. 18, 19 20.

True Chriſtians the friends of Chriſt, that are obedient unto his commands, they love one another with the love of Chriſt, and are hated and perſecuted by the ſpirit of the world for their love and faithfulneſs unto Chriſt.

And

And whereas it is said, that *the service of God is perfect freedom*, what is it then? is it not a freedom from sin, wrath, and condemnation? and are not they that are in the service of God in perfect freedom? And if the service of God be perfect freedom, whether ought any to be forced either to it or from it, by outward compulsion? and if you say, though the service of God be perfect freedom, yet it is not perfect freedom from sin, what is it perfect freedom from, and unto? seeing that the Apostle saith, when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness, *Rom.*6.20. Are servants of sin free from righteousness? what are they then, who daily err and go astray from the ways of God, and daily offend against Gods holy Laws, being as themselves say, miserable sinners? What fruit have they then in those things, whereof they are now ashamed? for (saith the Apostle) *the end of those things is death*, *Rom.*6.20,21. But the same Apostle speaks of a freedom from sin, saying, *now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life*, *Rom.*6.22,23. They who are free from sin, are at liberty to serve the Lord, whose fruit is unto holiness, and the end thereof is life everlasting, as aforesaid.

Concerning the Light.

In the third Collect for aid against all perils: it is said, *Lighten our darkness we beseech thee O Lord.* Are you yet in darkness, and not illuminated, because you say, *Lighten our darkness we beseech thee, O Lord?* And again, in the Letany you say, *That it may please thee to illuminate all Bishops, Pastors, and Ministers of the Church.* Are the Bishops, Pastors, and Ministers of the Church in darkness, and not yet illuminated; or doth God send forth Bishops, Pastors, and Ministers, before illuminnation? Because the Apostles and Ministers of Christ, said, *We preach not our selves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and our selves your servants for Jesus sake*, 2 Cor.4.5, 6,7. *For God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; but we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

The

196 The Ministers of Christ were not in darkness but in the light, and these are illuminated, and were sent to illuminate others, or to turn them from darkness unto light: they who by vertue of their preaching, did turn people from darkness unto light, they did convert people from their sinful ways and courses unto God, by turning them from the power of Satan unto God; and such were and are the true Ministers and Messengers of God. That light which turns people from the power of Satan unto God, is a souls-converting light; and they who in the power of that light, and by vertue thereof do by their preaching turn people from darkness unto light, they do convert them by their Ministry on the Lords behalf from their sinful ways and courses, by turning them from the power of Satan unto God, and such are the Ministers of Christ, as aforesaid.

The light of Christ declared of in the Scripture, and now owned and born witness of by the people of God called *Quakers*, is that light which turns people from their sinful ways and courses unto God, who believe in, and obey the same. Therefore that light is a soul-converting light, as aforesaid.

And for owning, holding forth, and bearing witness of this light, in principle, doctrine, and conversation, have the people of God called Quakers, met with great opposition and persecution. And now this light is acknowledged by common confession; therefore inasmuch as you own the light by common confession, how can you in equity and reason raise opposition against us, or persecute, and punish us, for owning in principle, doctrine, and conversation, that which you confess unto, and own in declaration?

It is said (3 Sunday after Easter in the Collect so called) *Almighty God, which shewest to all men that be in errour, the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness.* And we say the same; do you not herein with us agree in declaration, or are you not in this principled for Quakers so called? How then can you in equity and reason punish us for owning in principle, doctrine, and conversation, that which you your selves own in declaration? You say that Almighty God doth shew the light of his truth to all men that be in errour, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness. Do you not

here

here confess and acknowledge these six things?

1 That God is the author of the light.

2 That the light it self is a pure, spiritual, soul-saving, justifying light in its own nature and property, and also to them who believe in, and obey the same.

3 That the act of discovery, or manifestation of the light, is Gods own act.

4 That the persons, or parties to whom the light is to discovered, shewn, or made manifest, are all men without exception.

5 That the state and condition wherein they are at the first discovery or manifestation of the light unto them, is whilst they are in errour, and out of the way of the Lord.

6 That the intent of Gods act of discovery and manifestation of the light unto them, is that they may come out of errour and the ways of unrighteousnes, into the way of righteousnes, peace, and salvation, which is the way of the Lord.

If so, do you not acknowledge and confess,

That all men are in errour, and out of the way of the Lord, until they believe in, and receive the light of the Lord to lead them therefrom, and guide them unto God from whence the light doth come?

That all men who believe in, and receive the light of the Lord, after discovery and manifestation thereof, do come out of darknes, errour, and the ways of unrighteousnes, into the ways of righteousnes, peace, and salvation, which is the way of the Lord?

That the way from errour and heresie, is the light which God discovers, with an intent to lead all that believes in, and obeys the same, out of errour and heresie into the way of righteousnes, the way of the Lord?

That the light of God guides men out of errour, in point of salvation and worship of God, and leads them unto God that believes in, and receives the same, according to the act of discovery, and intent of God, as aforesaid?

Then to reject the light of Gods truth after Gods act of discovery thereof, by refusing and denying to yield obedience thereunto, is to reject God, who is the author of the light, and to

reject Gods act of discovery of the light; and also to reject God's love held forth in the intent of the discovery thereof; and such remains in errour, and are out of the way of righteousnes, and very unfit to guide others into the ways of *God*, who daily err and go astray therefrom themselves.

And how can any be competent Judges of errour, who themselves are subject unto, and daily live in errour? And if errour from the ways of God be an offence punishable by Law, what Law is it punishable by? and are not they daily punishable by the same Law, who daily err and go astray from the ways of God, and do daily offend against *Gods* holy Laws?

Forasmuch as you own in declaration, many of those things which we own in life and conversation, though you seem to come farr short of in conversation, you ought not in equity or reason to punish us as offenders, about matters of conscience in point of Religion and worship of God, but rather give us the right hand of fellowship, and equal liberty with you in point of Religion and worship of God, because we own in life and conversation many things which you own in declaration, which we could be glad to behold and meet you in, in life and conversation (setting all your contradictions aside.) You own purity of heart in declaration, and we own the same in principle and practice, or life and conversation; How can you be offended at us for holding forth purity of heart in conversation, when you own the same in declaration? where the Priest exhorts the people, saying, *I pray and beseech you, as many as be here present, to accompany me with a pure heart, saying after me*: and they must say with him, that they have daily erred and strayed from the ways of God like lost sheep, and that they have followed too much the devices and desires of their own hearts, and that they have daily offended against *Gods* holy Laws: and that they have left undone those things which they ought to have done, and that they have done those things which they ought not to have done, and that there is no health in them, but they are, they say, miserable sinners. Are these the signs of a pure heart? and if there be no health, neither in Priest nor people, is there any cure of souls in them? is it not spoken in reference to souls health? because there is bodily

health

health in them, when they make that confession. And if there be no souls health in them, is there a sound or pure heart in them? yet they allow of purity of heart however, and that it is a Christians duty to accompany one another in prayer with a pure heart to the throne of the heavenly grace; and we acknowledge it to be our duty and practice to accompany one another in prayer with a pure heart to the throne of the heavenly grace.

And presently after they have acknowledged purity of heart, and made their confession, as aforesaid, they say, *We beseech him to grant us true repentance and his holy spirit, that those things may please him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy.* Here they beg repentance and Gods holy Spirit, as if they had not yet received the same. However they ought not to be offended at others who have obtained repentance, and received the holy Spirit, because they pray for the same: and it is also to be observed, that they acknowledge that the people of God, by vertue of the Spirit of God are guided and impowered to pray and perform the things that are good, acceptable and well-pleasing unto God, and we own the same; here they own in declaration the principle and practice of the people of God called Quakers, and therefore ought not to be offended at them for the same, *viz.* that the people of God, by vertue of the Spirit of God, are guided and impowered to pray and perform the things that are good, acceptable and well-pleasing to the Lord; and that the people of God who have obtained repentance, and received the Spirit of God, are by the same directed and enabled to live in purity and holiness of life continually, which is well-pleasing unto the Lord.

And you say, *O God, make clean our hearts within us, and take not thy holy Spirit from us.* Then you account that you have the holy Spirit, or else what need you pray that it be not taken from you? that cannot be taken from one, if he have it not; however you ought not to be offended at others for having and owning the Spirit, because you acknowledge you have it your selves. You also confess that your hearts are unclean, saying, *O God, make clean our hearts within us*; and before the Priest said, *I pray and beseech you, as many as be here present, to accompany me with a pure heart.* If you had a pure heart when you begun your service, how

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comes your hearts to be unclean before you have done, or were they not as unclean before? however you acknowledge that your hearts are unclean within you, and that it is the work of Gods holy Spirit within to cleanse the heart from its inward uncleanness, though you cannot yet witness the same to be done in your selves, whose hearts you say are unclean.

You say, (first Sunday in *Advent*, in the Collect so called) *Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life.* It seems though you acknowlede, that you have not yet cast away the works of darkness, nor put upon you the armour of light; you do account it to be a Christians duty to cast away the works of darkness, and to put upon them the armour of Light. And the people of God, by vertue of the grace of God, are enabled to cast away the works of darkness, and to put upon them the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life. And therefore you ought not to punish them for so doing.

You say, *Almighty God, mortifie and kill all vices in us,* (*Innocents* day, in the Collect.) Though vices yet live in you, it is to be observed, 1 That you acknowledge it to be the work of God to mortifie and kill all vices inwardly in the hearts of people. 2 That people ought to have all vices mortified and killed in them by the power of God, whilst they live upon the face of the earth. 3 That you allow of the work of God in mortifying and killing all vices inwardly in others, because you pray for it to be done in your selves; then you ought to allow of them as the people of God, and be in love with them, wherein God hath so appeared as to mortifie and kill all vices within them: then you ought to allow of us as the people of God, and be in love with us, because God hath been pleased to mortifie and kill all vices in us (who are reproachfully called Quakers) as much as in any people this day upon the face of the earth. And our blameless life and godly conversation doth testifie the same, to the praise of the glory of his grace who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

And do you not acknowledge and own inspiration, and that the thoughts of your hearts are unclean, when you are about the receiving of that called Communion? because there you say, *Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from*

whom no secrets are hid, cleanse from the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnifie thy holy name. May it not be observed, that you hereby do acknowledge, 1 That the thoughts of your hearts (and at such a time as when you say you are at the Table of the Lord) are unclean within you? 2 That the uncleanness of the thoughts of your hearts is the cause of the imperfection of your love to God. 3 That it is the act of God, by the inspiration of his holy Spirit, to take away the uncleanness of the thoughts of the heart, which were the cause of imperfection of love towards God, as aforesaid. 4 That the uncleanness of the thoughts of the heart being removed and taken away, the heart is made capable of being perfect in love towards God, even to love him perfectly, and worthily to magnifie his holy name.

And you acknowledge, that all your doings without charity are nothing worth, and therefore you desire God to send his holy Spirit and pour into your hearts that most excellent gift of charity (*Quinquages.* Coll.) If all your actions be nothing worth without charity, and if you yet want that excellent gift of charity, because you pray for it, and for the Spirit to pour it into your hearts, what are your actions worth without charity? your selves confess they are nothing worth without it; then wait to receive the spirit to pour forth that excellent gift of charity into your hearts. And when you have received that gift, you will not unworthily punish us, or any of Gods people for matters of conscience in point of Religion and worship of God, but will see it just that we have equal liberty and toleration with you in point of Religion and worship of God.

And to that holy spirit of God, by which the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified, which doth cleanse the thoughts of the heart by its holy inspiration or operation, and pour into the sanctified heart that most excellent gift of charity, to that we can commit our innocent cause, which will be for our vindication and justification.

If you were a pure-hearted people, you would not cause us to suffer by you for the same; that would be to contradict and oppose your own principles. For a pure heart is a sanctified heart, and doth not oppose it self in a sanctified people. If you were

governed

governed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, you would love us and be one with us in matters of conscience in point of Religion and worship of God; because we own in principle and practice the government and sanctification of the Spirit of God: and therefore we ought in equity and reason to be beloved of you, and tolerated by you in matters of Religion and worship of God, because you own that in declaration, which we own in principle and practice, or life and conversation.

And whereas you own the light of Gods truth in declaration, to enlighten mens darkness, or that men are enlightned by it whilst they are in darkness, errour, and the ways of unrighteousness, to the end that they may come out of errour, and the ways of unrighteousness, into the ways of righteousness, which is the way of the Lord; and as aforesaid, you own in declaration, that which we own in principle, doctrine, and conversation, who have believed in, received, and obeyed the light of Gods truth, according to Gods act and intent of discovery, and manifestation thereof; and are by the light led out of darkness, errour, and the ways of unrighteousness into the way of the Lord, as aforesaid: therefore you ought to love us, and let us have equal liberty and toleration with you in matters of Religion and worship of God, and free us from the force of the aforesaid Presentment, and stand up amongst men and Christians for the vindication and justification of the people of God called Quakers, because you own in declaration, purity of heart, divine and spiritual teachings, the government and sanctification of the spirit of God amongst the people of God, the light of Gods truth also to guide men out of errour and the ways of unrighteousness, into the way of righteousness, peace, and salvation; and that it is a Christians duty by vertue of the grace of God received, to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life; and that all vices are to be mortified and killed in the hearts of the people of God, that by inspiration and operation of Gods holy Spirit, the thoughts of mens hearts are to be cleansed, to the end that they may perfectly love the Lord God, and worthily magnifie his holy name; that the people of God who have obtained repentance, and received Gods holy Spirit, are to live in continual holiness and godliness; and by vertue of the Spirit of

God

God received, are impowered to pray and perform the things that are good, acceptable and well-pleasing to the Lord. That the people of God by the Spirit of God have a right judgment in all things. And that the hearts of Gods people are cleansed and sanctified by the Spirit of God. And that God doth pour into sanctified hearts that most excellent gift of charity; so that the love of God is shed abroad in the hearts of the people of God by the Spirit of God, and much more. All which are the known principles, doctrine, and practice of the people of God called Quakers. And if you did but experimentally and really own, and live in the same, you and we should be one. However inasmuch as you own in declaration, that which we own in principle, doctrine, and practice, or life and conversation, you ought to love us as the people of God, and free us from the force of the aforesaid Presentment, to all intents, constructions, and purposes, and let us have equal liberty and toleration with you, as aforesaid; and to stand up for our vindication and justification amongst men and Christians.

Written about the middle of the ninth month, 1662. *Richard Farnsworth.*

THE END.